



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

December 18, 2013

Dear Representative:

I am writing on behalf of the AFL-CIO to urge you to reinstate and extend the Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) through 2014. Unless Congress acts, approximately 1.3 million jobless workers who will lose all unemployment benefits after December 28, including 20,000 recent veterans, and another 1.9 million Americans will lose their benefits during the first six months of 2014.

There are still 1.3 million fewer jobs in our economy than six years ago when the “great recession” began, and 37.3% of the unemployed have been unable to find jobs for over six months. While the official unemployment rate has slowly crept down to 7 percent, long term unemployment is at historic levels, with 3 unemployed workers for every available job.

Today, 14 million American workers are unemployed. About 37 percent or over 4 million people have been looking for and unable to find a job for at least six months, and the average unemployed worker searches for a job for more than nine months. Since 1958, Congress has not allowed the EUC program to lapse when the level of long term unemployment is as high as it is now.

Unemployment benefits average a modest \$300 per week and allow jobless workers to provide for their family while searching for work. These benefits provide a critical lifeline for workers and play an essential role in sustaining small businesses and local communities. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that ending the EUC program will cost our economy up to 300,000 urgently needed jobs in the year ahead.

I strongly urge you to immediately pass appropriate legislation to extend the EUC program through 2014.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department